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SUBJECT: G/TIP INTERIM REPORT FOR BAHRAIN

REF: A. STATE 194903

[B. STATE 174045](#)

[¶1.](#) Short-term action items delivered to the GOB in September 2005 (ref B) guide post's response to ref A. The following paragraphs cover the three items in ref A, among other items.

Action item No. 1: Shaikh Abdul Aziz Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary for Coordination and Follow-up is the de facto anti-TIP national coordinator as the chair of an inter-ministerial taskforce comprised of officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Labor, Social Development, Interior, and Justice. In an October 2005 meeting, the committee tasked the Minister of Social Development with exploring the possibility of signing an MOU with International Organization for Migration (IOM) that would allow the IOM to register legally with the GOB. As yet there is no concrete follow-up on IOM's status.

[¶2.](#) Action item No. 2: The Ministry of Justice hosted Italian judge and trafficking expert Maria Grazia Giammarinaro for one week to train judges, public prosecutors and Ministry of Justice officials about international laws regarding trafficking in September 2005. Judge Giammarinaro trained 25 officials in international treaties and conventions and in comparative trafficking legislation from other nations. Judge Giammarinaro will return to Bahrain in early 2006 for one week for follow-up training with a broader group of judges, prosecutors and government officials. In November 2005 USAID contractor and trafficking expert Dr. Mohamed Mattar visited Bahrain to assess needs to guide future trainings. In April and May 2006, Ministry of Interior Head of Investigation for the General Directorate of Nationality, Passports and Residence Ghazi Saleh Al Doseri will attend an International Visitor (IV) Program focused on combating trafficking. Regarding the free visa problem, the Ministry of Labor identified 130 companies in October and November 2005 that were using free visa workers. The Ministry levied fines on these companies and required that the companies provide airline tickets to the workers' home countries. To provide increased monitoring of companies the Ministry recently hired 20 additional inspectors to begin a four-month training course. This represents a significant increase in the number of inspectors, to a total of 60. Additionally in November 2005, the Ministry hired two inspectors to follow up on complaints received about the 85 manpower recruitment agencies operating in Bahrain. This is the first time there have been officials dedicated full-time to the accountability of recruitment agencies. To increase transparency and accountability, the Ministry of Labor is currently working with the banking sector to establish worker bank accounts so that all worker salaries will be electronically transferred to their accounts. The Ministry will begin requiring companies to use the system in the first quarter of 2006.

[¶3.](#) Action item No. 3: The Ministry of Justice began drafting anti-trafficking legislation in September 2005. Judge Giammarinaro worked with the draft committee in the initial stages and continues to review each draft. In addition, MEPI-funded American Bar Association (ABA) in-house legal consultants provide continual feedback and guidance to the Ministry. Dr. Mohamed Mattar is providing sample draft language for several pieces of the legislation. The draft is expected to be completed by year end. The draft legislation will then be forwarded to the cabinet for approval before being considered by the parliament for a vote. The parliament is currently considering labor reform legislation designed to reduce Bahrain's reliance upon foreign workers and is expected to vote on it in December. Indications are that domestic laborers, who are vulnerable to trafficking, will be covered only in part by this labor reform legislation; remaining issues for domestics will be covered by specific future legislation also to be drafted by the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry has been implementing major reform including the introduction of automation and the overhaul of the case management system to increase efficiency and expedite all cases including labor cases. The inter-ministerial committee has tasked Justice with documenting trafficking-related cases. In November 2005, a conference of Ministers of Justice from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries chose the Bahraini Ministry of Justice to take the lead in introducing unified anti-trafficking legislation for all GCC countries.

14. Action item No. 4: The Ministry of Labor trafficking hotline is still only staffed during Ministry hours of operation. Hotline staff members say that funding limitations do not allow for the hiring of additional help at this time. The hotline phone number is published daily in the English language Gulf Daily News, in the Local Scene section. A separate Labor inspection hotline is also published daily in the same paper.

15. Action item No. 5: The Ministry of Social Development submitted the by-laws and administrative and staffing plan documentation for the operation of the shelter to the Civil Service Administration in October 2005. Approval of the plan is expected by the end of November 2005. Once approved, the Ministry will begin hiring and training staff for the shelter. The Ministry has already identified candidates from the Ministries of Social Development and Health and NGOs to become the administrators of the new shelter. Funding at a level of 500,000 Bahraini dinars (over \$1.3 million) has been allocated for the first year of operation. Land has also been set aside for construction of a new shelter facility. While the new structure is being constructed, the government will rent space in existing buildings for shelter operation. The Ministry of Social Development has identified several suitable facilities and will lease one when the plan is approved. Members of the Ministry have been meeting with referring agencies, such as the police and hospitals, to coordinate efforts once the shelter is open. According to the Minister of Social Development, the center is expected to be fully operational by mid-2006.

16. Action item No. 6: In addition to an existing Foreign Workers Manual providing important legal information and emergency contacts for embassies and local authorities, the Ministry of Labor is currently updating a labor information leaflet, available in source country languages and distributed since 2003, to include illustrations for illiterate workers. The Ministry expects it to be completed and republished by the end of December 2005. The Ministry elicited content for the leaflet from the embassies of worker source countries. When the new leaflet is completed, the Ministry is planning media events to introduce it. The leaflet will be distributed, along with the other source country language leaflets, at the airport, the Naeem Health Center, where expatriate workers get physical exams after arrival in Bahrain, the national identification registration office, embassies, and at the Ministry of Labor, among other locations.

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